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FIVE NEW RODENTS FROM BRITISH
EAST AFRICA

WITH TWO PLATES

BY

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Field Naturalist, Smithsonian African Expedition



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FIVE NEW RODENTS FROM BRITISH EAST AFRICA

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(WITH TWO PLATES)

Five Murine rodents collected by members of the Smithsonian African Expedition in British East Africa during October and November, 1909, appear to be new to science. This paper, in which they are described, is the fourth dealing with the results of the expedition.

PELOMYS ROOSEVELTI, new species

PLATE 1, *a*, SKULL, NATURAL SIZE

Type from the Nzoia River, Guas Ngishu plateau, British East Africa; adult male, number 162881, U. S. Nat. Mus.; collected by Edmund Heller, November 16, 1909; original number, 1231.

Coloration.—Above bright tawny golden, heavily lined with black; hairs annulated black and tawny, with a mixture of much longer black hairs which possess a strong olive iridescence similar to the color of a golden mole. Sides more tawny, with a slight mixture of grayish, but the color of the sides well defined against the white of the belly. Underparts white, faintly tinged with cream-buff, the hairs white nearly to the base, where they become grayish for a short distance. Limbs tawny above, whitish below. Tail sharply bicolor, dusky black above, below tawny yellow. Ears thinly haired with tawny yellow.

Measurements.—Head and body, 170; tail, 153; hind foot, 36; ear, 19. Skull: condylobasal length, 34.2; basilar length, 30; zygomatic breadth, 18.5; nasal, 14; interorbital constriction, 5; diastema, 9; mandible, 21.4; maxillary toothrow, 8.5.

Compared to *P. fallax* this is a longer-tailed species. In coloration it is more yellowish, the back with a marked olive iridescence, the sides with sharp line of demarcation. Annulation of tail less distinct, the tail clothed with short, stiff hair. Grooving of upper incisors wide, the grooves wide and close to the outer edge. Palatal foramina large and extending well behind the anterior border of the first upper molar; interorbital beads low and flat.

DASYMYS HELUKUS, new speciesPLATE 1, *b*, SKULL, NATURAL SIZE

Type from Sirgoit, Guas Ngishu plateau, British East Africa; adult male number 162889, U. S. Nat. Mus.; collected by Edmund Heller, November 19, 1909; original number, 1239.

Diagnosis.—Like *Dasymys incomptus* of Natal, but skull with less heavy rostrum, audital bullæ distinctly smaller, and palate wider in proportion to toothrow; teeth less robust than those of *D. incomptus*, the reëntrant angles on anterior border of first and second laminae of m^1 and m^2 better developed.

Coloration.—Dorsal coloration a mixture of black and tawny, the black predominating greatly, giving a general blackish effect, the individual hairs annulated with tawny and black with a mixture of longer black hairs. Color of sides more grayish and merging gradually into the buffy wash of the lower parts. Feet and ears thinly clothed with dusky hairs. Tail blackish with prominent annulations and a sparse covering of short black hairs.

Measurements.—Head and body, 185; tail, 143; hind foot, 34; ear, 22. Skull: condylobasal length, 37.8; basilar length, 33; zygomatic breadth, 20.2; diastema, 11.8; mandible, 24; maxillary toothrow, 7.

This species has somewhat the appearance of *M. alexandrinus*, but the hair is much softer and longer and the tail is conspicuously shorter.

LEGGADA NAIVASHÆ, new speciesPLATE 2, *a*, SKULL, NATURAL SIZE

Type from eastern edge of Naivasha plains, at the base of the Aberdare Mountains, British East Africa; adult male, number 162885, U. S. Nat. Mus.; collected by Edmund Heller, October 18, 1909; original number, 1186.

Coloration.—Upperparts blackish with a slight mixture of tawny hairs, the pelage consisting of long black hairs and shorter tawny and black annulated ones; sides somewhat more tawny than the median dorsal region. Underparts pearl gray, whitening about the throat and chin, sharply defined from the dark sides, the hair everywhere plumbeous basally. Limbs dusky brown above, below gray like the belly. Tail black above, dark brown below, thinly haired throughout. Ears externally thinly haired with black, internally clothed with tawny hairs.

Measurements.—Head and body, 76; tail, 54; hind foot, 16.5; ear, 12. Skull: condylobasal length, 19.6; basilar length, 16.4; zygomatic breadth, 11; nasal, 8; interorbital constriction, 3.8; diastema, 5.5; mandible, 12.8; maxillary toothrow, 4.

Appears to be most nearly related to *L. triton* Thomas.

SACCOSTOMUS MEARNSI, new species

PLATE 2, *b*, SKULL, NATURAL SIZE

Type from Changamwe, British East Africa; adult male, number 162882, U. S. Nat. Mus.; collected by E. A. Mearns, November 28, 1909; original number, 7292.

Coloration.—Above drab gray washed with hair brown, the individual hairs plumbeous basally, medially light grayish with the tips blackish. Sides more grayish and merging gradually into the light grayish of the underparts. Ears and limbs grayish like the body coloration. Feet whitish. Underparts light gray with a faint buffy wash, the hairs plumbeous basally. Tail dusky brownish above, whitish below.

Measurements.—Head and body, 156; tail, 65; hind foot, 23; ear, 16. Skull: condylobasal length, 32; basilar length, 28.5; zygomatic breadth, 17; nasal, 14.2; interorbital constriction, 4; diastema, 10; mandible, 20; maxillary toothrow, 6.4.

Compared to *S. mashonæ* of South Africa, to which this species is most nearly related, it differs in its much larger size, and relatively larger hind feet, tail, and skull. It is lighter in coloration without the iron gray effect to the upperparts and with the underparts considerably lighter gray.

STEATOMYS ATHI, new species

PLATE 2, *c*, SKULL, NATURAL SIZE

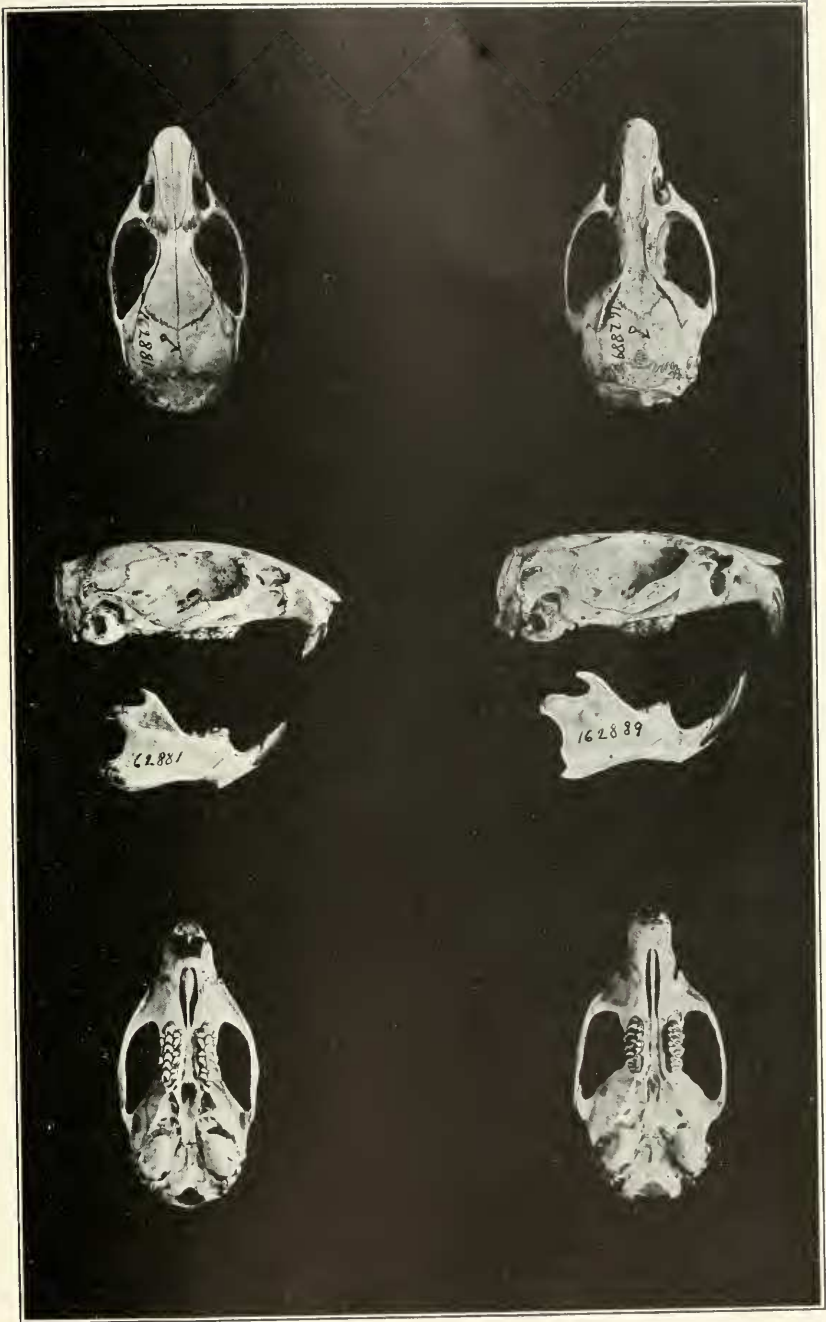
Type from the Lukenia Hills, Athi Plains, British East Africa; adult male, number 162883, U. S. Nat. Mus.; collected by J. A. Loring, November 22, 1909; original number, 8259.

Coloration.—Above hair-brown with an intermixture of buffy; the pelage composed chiefly of buffy hairs with dark brown tips mixed profusely with longer black hairs throughout the median dorsal region. Sides of body a mixture of buffy and grayish without any blackish hairs, and sharply defined against the pure white of the underparts. Ears dusky, very thinly haired; a conspicuous white tuft of hair immediately below the opening. Underparts and feet

pure silky white, the hairs white to the roots. Tail dark brownish above, buffy below; covered with short hairs.

Measurements.—Head and body, 83; tail, 46.5; hind foot, 16.5; ear, 11.5. Skull: condylobasal length, 22.2; basilar length, 19; zygomatic breadth, 12.5; nasal, 9.7; interorbital constriction, 4.5; diastema, 6.3; mandible, 13.2; maxillary toothrow, 4.4.

This species differs from *S. pratensis* of South Africa and Mozambique in its much lighter dorsal coloration, which shows no tendency toward rufous, and in its larger size.

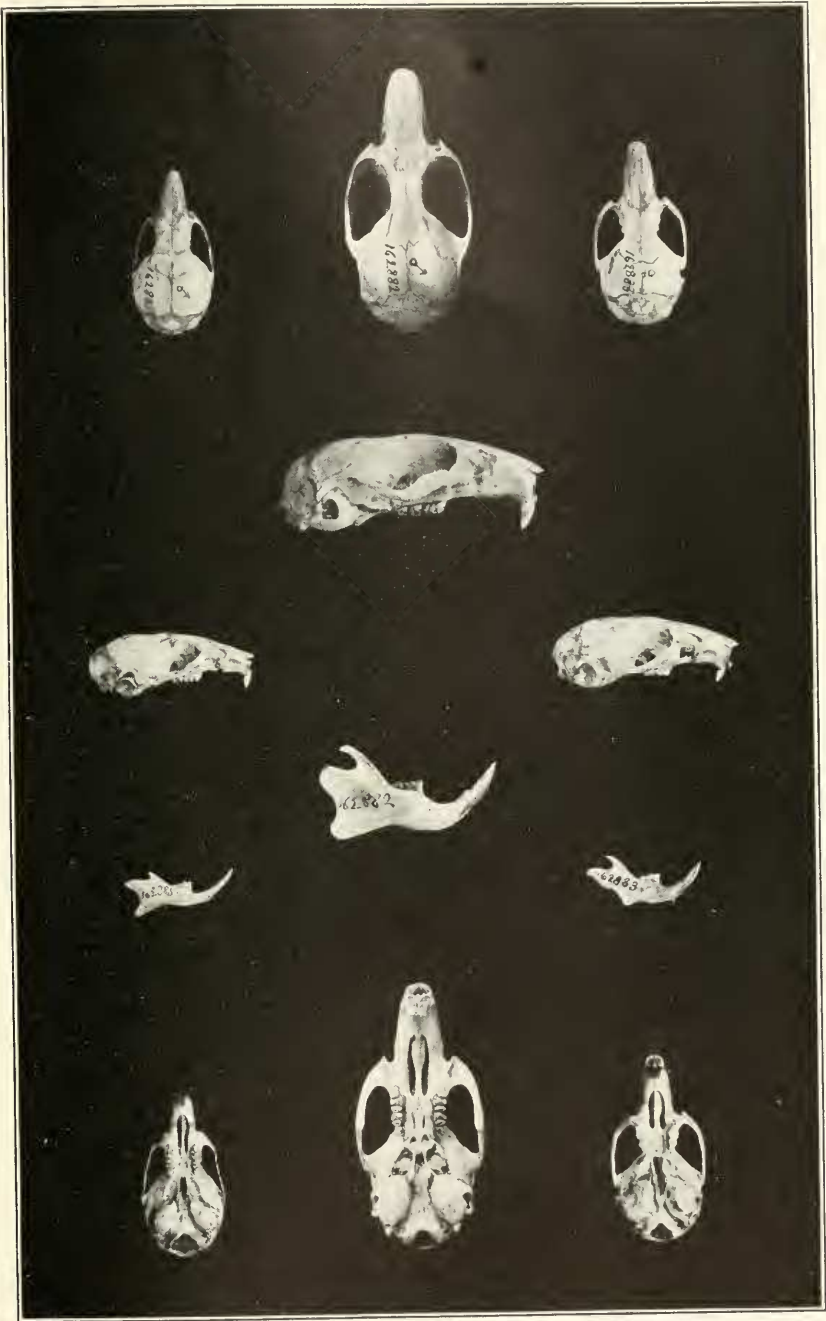


a

PELOMYS ROOSEVELTI HELLER
Type. Natural size

b

DASYMYS HELUKUS HELLER
Type. Natural size



a

b

c

LEGGADA NAIVASHÆ HELLER
Type. Natural size

SACCOSTOMUS MEARNSEI HELLER
Type. Natural size

STEATOMYS ATHI HELLER
Type. Natural size